

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: April 6, 2021
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present via zoom meeting were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Others participating via zoom: Elizabeth Newland, Jennifer Howard, Allison Marchese, Jacob Morris-Segal, Laura Allen, Chuck Ogden, Joan Goodkind, Mary McGurn, Juliette Haas, James Harwood, Bruce Bernstein, Jade Carrol, Rebecca Turner, Darryl Turner, Richard Allen, Steve Cohen, Ian Rasch.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

MINUTES:

Minutes of March 9, March 16 and March 23, 2021 were accepted with minor edits.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

The Board noted that though it has no legal jurisdiction over poles being placed for Broadband along Brookvale and Hilltop Road, Fiber Connect would like the Town's support. Jennifer Howard(Department of Conservation & Recreation) and Elizabeth Newland (Fisheries & Wildlife) reported that they have been working closely with Adam Chait of Fiber Connect and have determined that the homeowners association owns Hilltop Road in the subdivision itself. Brookvale Road is owned in part by DCR and F&W which will require a legislative easement for placement of poles. A site visit to pinpoint the exact locations of poles will be held. A portion of the property is in a National Heritage designation as a habitat for certain protected species.

COVID-19:

As Chuck Ogden, Chairman of the Board of Health, has another commitment the Board agreed to move the topic of vaccinating town employees up on the agenda. Chairman Ogden said the Board of Health advocates very strongly that all town employees who can be vaccinated do so. The Board of Health recommends that the Selectboard say to those who are reluctant to get vaccinated that it is required as condition of employment to wear a mask when on duty until COVID condition is past. Chairman McGurn said that he has spoken to the Stewards of both Unions and expressed a strong opinion that all union members get vaccinated. Both Highway and Police Union Stewards noted that there is some resistance from some Union members to get vaccinated. Selectperson Brazie reported that all employees in town hall with the exception of the Health Director have made it known that they are either fully vaccinated or have their first vaccine. Chuck Ogden said that the Health Director was fully vaccinated. Personnel Director Cara Becker and Covid Compliance Officer Jayne Smith will speak with those who are reluctant.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Board has received a complaint from a resident about the danger of the OxBow Road/Blunt Road intersection. The Highway Department had sought permission from the property owner there to allow the town to remove some trees and cut back the bank to make the line of sight clearer. The Board will ask the Road Superintendent to ask the current property owners if they would agree. Walk Boston will be asked to look at this area when they come to view other dangerous areas in Egremont.

The Board discussed the role of the elected Board of Assessors and Regional Resource Group (RRG). Though it was agreed that RRG was efficient it was noted that they are representing more and more towns, which is increasing their work load. The Board will discuss making the Board of Assessors appointed at the meeting on April 13.

The Board must vote to opt out if it doesn't wish to have Egremont sprayed for mosquitos under a state spraying system. If the Board voted to opt out then an alternative management plan must be presented to DEP. Juliette Haas said that the Board of Health would write the alternative management plan. The Board will take a vote when the management plan has been drafted.

The Board has received a request for the Town to pay for vocational education tuition for Madeline Collingwood, an Egremont student, to attend the agricultural program at Housatonic Valley in Connecticut. The town is obligated to pay the tuition as required by MGL Chapter 74, Section 7C. The tuition for the first of 4 years is \$6,800 and subsequent years to be determined. The Board voted unanimously to approve the request. It was noted that the Greenagers is working with Housatonic Valley to have a program in Egremont.

At the request of the Town Accountant, the Board voted unanimously to close out the unexpended Septic Repair program grant balance of \$10,800 and the FY 2018 Federal Emergency Management Planning Grant in the amount of \$2,458.20.

The Town has received 4 bids for the electrical upgrade and generator at Town Hall. The low bid in the amount of \$170,404 was received from Ryan Electric, the high bid is \$271,680. The low bid is over budget. The Town could vote to increase the budget, change orders could be made to the contract saving some funds if town crews did some of the excavation and carpentry work. If the Board agreed to change from a propane fired generator to a diesel fired generator the savings would be about \$30,000 and bring the project under budget. Vice-Chairman Vermeulen spoke against a diesel fire generator due to environmental issues. The engineer said that with today's technology and emissions diesel was no longer a threat to the environment. The Board voted in favor 2, McGurn and Brazie, with Vermeulen voting no to award the bid to Ryan Electric and authorize a change order to switch from propane to diesel.

Valerie Race has applied for a special permit to utilize a mobile home at her families home at 116 Hillsdale Road while her home at 114 Hillsdale Road is under construction. The Board voted unanimously to approve, pending Board of Health approval on the septic and well hook, through January 1, 2022.

The South Egremont School PTO has requested permission to hold a tag sale at French Park on May 23. The Board voted unanimously to approve this as long as the group conformed to all COVID-19 guidelines.

OLD BUSINESS:

James Harwood presented a plan for the Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire to work in partnership with the Town's Housing Committee to lay out a plan for affordable housing on the Town's property. CDC can leverage funds that the town can't, the town would keep control, the properties would be an asset to the town. It is felt that a limit of 10 units would be optimum for the land. Joan Goodkind, Housing Committee Chair, noted that the Committee has not discussed this and that an RFP needs to be issued seeking proposals. Richard Allen, a member of the Committee, felt the project should be homeownership not rental. James said CDC would work towards what the town wanted. The Housing Committee was tasked to work with the CDC, and possibly Habitat for Humanity, to draft an RFP.

Darryl Turner reported for the Agricultural Commission that towns cannot adopt laws to require notification to property owners of pesticide application. State statute does not allow town's to adopt any regulations in regards to pesticide treatment. Darryl noted that pesticide companies are generally agreeable to notifying residents when they are planning to treat farm property. Selectperson Brazie reported that her research supported the fact that the town cannot adopt any regulations. The Board told Ms. Carroll that she should contact the pesticide companies. Ms. Carroll said that she had tried to find out from the farmer but was treated rudely. Ian Rasch suggested that legal counsel be asked to confirm that the Town cannot formulate a regulation. The Board agreed to do so.

The Board has received the final plan for the lighting project on Rte 23/41. The Board and the Historical Commission have agreed to the plan which places 20 lights along Main Street. The Board voted to approve and voted to adopt the lighting fixture with the curved arm as the town's standard fixture. The Historical Commission did not approve of the fixture. Commission Chair Rebecca Tunner asked that the Commission's memo re: the fixture be sent to MassDOT with the approval of the plan.

COVID-19:

It was noted that French Park has been seeing a large increase in use and there have been some complaints of failure to wear masks and social distance, especially among parents with groups of children. Chairman McGurn will speak with the Police about enforcement. Board of Health Director Juliette Haas said she could also enforce.

BUDGET/TOWN MEETING:

The Board set June 9 as the bad weather and/or second night for Town Meeting.

FOLLOW UPS:

The Mount Washington Road reconstruction engineers have informed the Town they will need additional funds to finish the 75% design, based on the MassDOT's comments on the 25% design. There may be other infrastructure grant programs coming out.

SELECTMEN'S ITEMS:

The Board will meet, via zoom, in a budget workshop on April 13.

Meeting adjourned at 12:27pm.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.21/apr6

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.